



New York Farm Bureau • 159 Wolf Road P.O. Box 5330 • Albany, New York 12205 • (518) 436-8495 Fax: (518) 431-5656 • www.nyfb.org

March 16, 2020

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

New York Farm Bureau (NYFB), the State's largest general agricultural advocacy organization, would like to express its concern regarding the on-going impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) and continued necessity of utilizing the H-2A agricultural guest worker program. These workers are approved to work in the U.S. through a vigorous screening process and serve as an essential workforce on farms across New York and across the country. It is important at this uncertain time, that the Administration ensure the flow of workers into the U.S. to help grow and produce food.

NYFB represents the great diversity of New York agriculture from row crops, specialty crops, vintners, orchards, livestock, dairy and both conventional production and organic production and a wide range of operation sizes. These producers have increasingly utilized the H-2A visa program in response to the shortage of available workers in the agricultural sector, and New York's strong and diverse agricultural industry is very dependent on a reliable work force.

With the continued spread of Covid-19, now more than ever, it is essential that America maintain its level of high-quality food production to ensure food security for the nation. These H-2A visa workers help to plant, manage, and harvest essential crops, including fruits and vegetables. While we are not asking the Administration to jeopardize public health and safety or border security, NYFB requests that the Department of Labor (DOL) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) ensures that all H-2A visa applications are reviewed and acted upon in a timely manner to ensure the flow of approved H-2A workers into the U.S. We also want to ensure that the Administration will allow these H-2A workers, who have been evaluated and do not pose a health risk, are able to travel into the U.S. and reach their place of employment. It is imperative that no borders, where there have not been widespread cases of Covid-19, be completely shut to allow the entry of these essential workers.

In the future, NYFB looks forward to working with Congress and the Administration to address wider concerns within the H-2A program like year-round access for our dairy farmers.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter which not only impacts farmers across the country but the national food supply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Fisher". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

David Fisher
President, New York Farm Bureau

cc: Senator Charles Schumer
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Eugene Scalia, Secretary of Labor
Kenneth Cuccinelli, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Acting Director